CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

ABRIDGED VERSION

GIVING NEW IMPETUS TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

BRIEF SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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PREAMBLE

This publication by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation results from a request made by the Minister of Education who, in November 2002, formally asked the Conseil to submit a brief on the teaching profession at the elementary and secondary levels, focused more specifically on

> "... the direction and importance to be given to the teaching profession by Québec society, based on an overall vision of the profession that allows for renewal, professionalization and, especially, valuing of the profession"
> (excerpt from the letter of the Minister of Education; free translation).

The Conseil gave joint responsibility for preparing this brief on the teaching profession to the Commission de l'enseignement primaire and the Commission de l'enseignement secondaire, considering that the expertise and experience of members from both the elementary and secondary levels was needed for a thorough examination of the issues.

As part of the preparatory process for this brief, the Conseil deemed it relevant to hold two major consultations: one with social players and the other with educational stakeholders. The first consultation targeted organizations involved in education, asking them to make written submissions and, in some cases, attend hearings. The Conseil is fully aware that this approach generated extra work for many organizations, but considers that their input has helped it to clarify its thinking. As a result, it would like to thank them for generously agreeing to participate in its work.

The second consultation targeted teachers at the elementary and secondary levels, through discussion groups. The Conseil would like to express its thanks for the interest they have taken in its work, and for their willingness to share their experience and expertise, allowing the Conseil to look more closely at the issues by linking them to the concrete realities of today's schools. Finally, the Conseil also benefited from the input of various experts it called upon to take part in its work, and it thanks them for their valuable contribution.

INTRODUCTION

For the last 40 years, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has remained closely involved with the teaching profession. It has stated, on numerous occasions, how important it is to maintain a high-quality teaching staff and establish conditions that allow teachers to use all their professional skills.

In order to respond effectively to the request made by the Minister of Education, the Conseil has focused on the significance of teaching, both in terms of the way the profession is perceived and in terms of its future development, since it considers these two aspects to be closely related.

The goal set by the Conseil was to answer the following two questions:

I. How is the teaching profession being perceived in Québec in 2004?

II. What direction should the future development of the profession take?

I. HOW IS THE TEACHING PROFESSION BEING PERCEIVED IN QUÉBEC IN 2004?

TEACHING: A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING PROFESSION

The teaching profession is in a state of continuous change. Formerly considered to be a vocation, since the 1960s, teaching has moved towards recognition as a true profession. The professionalization of teaching is an underlying trend in education, extending well beyond the borders of Québec to other jurisdictions, and is often seen as a response to the new expectations placed on schools. Professionalization is often considered one of the prerequisites for the implementation of a series of education reforms, in Québec and elsewhere. Overall, the main objectives of the professionalization movement are to increase the professional autonomy of teachers, both in their teaching and in the management of their profession, to encourage the ongoing development of teaching expertise, to promote professional ethics, and to improve the social status of teachers.

Professionalization has not proceeded in a linear fashion since the 1960s. The first foundations for a true teaching profession were laid in the 1960s and 1970s. The publication of the Parent report and the transfer of teaching training programs to Québec's universities, for example, were key points in

this process. Labour conflicts, in particular up to the mid 1970s, led to considerable improvements in teachers' working conditions. The 1970s, however, were also a time of upheaval. The publication of a green paper in 1977, followed by an orange paper in 1979 and a white paper in 1982, led to major changes in the school system. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, conflict between unions and employers had lasting effects on teachers, for example when special legislation was adopted, notably in 1982.

A period of budget restrictions that began in 1976 and a more centralized approach to management led to a definition of teaching that did not encourage professional autonomy. In addition, teaching seemed to be limited to classroom instruction and the application of reforms and changes designed by other groups. A surplus of newly qualified teachers made entry into the profession difficult; new teachers had to face difficult working conditions and low job security.

In 1984, at the request of the Minister of Education, the Conseil published a brief on the teaching profession that painted a relatively gloomy picture. The 1980s were a difficult time for teachers, both because of their working conditions and because of a lack of progress in the area of professionalization.

However, the 1990s were more encouraging. In 1992 the Conseil published an annual report that crystallized thinking on the teaching profession, and made proposals for its future development. A major reform of teacher training, launched in 1994, embodied the objectives of professionalization in the new approach to basic training. The subsequent reform of the education system that began in 1997 created a new lever for professionalization, introducing new areas in which teachers could exercise their professional autonomy. The reform provided support for professionalization, in particular, by redistributing the powers of the various players in the education system, and by recognizing their respective areas of expertise. It increased the freedom with which teachers could interpret and apply the official curriculum, and encouraged them to exercise their professional judgment. In its 2002 brief, the Office des professions du Québec provided more formal recognition that teaching was indeed a profession, even though it did not go as far as recommending the creation of a professional order to allow the profession to manage its affairs autonomously.

The significance attached to teaching today is thus clearly influenced by a "professional ideal" that has gradually emerged since the early 1960s.

A PROPITIOUS TIME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The Conseil considers that the current context is a propitious time for the development of the teaching profession, because the progress made so far has led to the consolidation of several aspects that can now form the basis for further development.

Introduction of a reference framework for teaching competencies

The reference framework for teaching competencies, originally intended for use in designing teacher training programs, is the fundamental point of reference for the development of the teaching profession. The knowledge and skills used in teaching can only be rationalized by clarifying the significance attached to the profession and the "professional ideal." The professional ideal, in fact, forms the basis for the measures that structure the profession, such as the reference framework, the organization of and curriculum for basic teacher training, the certification of new teachers, and professional development. Currently, the reference framework is based on a "professionalizing" view of teaching that focuses on its professional nature and on the importance of the cultural dimension.

The introduction of the reference framework for teaching competencies is one of the key changes made over the last 10 years to the way the profession is organized. For example, teacher training programs are now designed using a shared reference framework; basic teacher training has been extended by one year and focuses more on the integration of theoretical and practical training and the development of teaching competency; partnerships between schools and universities have been developed, especially in the area of teaching practicums; and teachers can also use the reference framework to direct their own professional development.

Regulation of the supply of new teachers to reflect the needs of the labour market

In 1994, Québec's universities and the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (MEQ) agreed to limit the number of admissions to teacher training programs, in order to regulate the supply of new teachers on the basis of labour market needs. This measure led to an improvement in the conditions of employment of newly-qualified teachers, especially in terms of job security. It also helped avert a flood of trainee teachers in elementary and secondary schools, given that each trainee teacher was required to complete 700 hours of practical training over four years, and it ensured the best possible conditions for completing this training.

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The professional empowerment of teachers

Since the implementation of Bill 180[1] in 1998, powers have been shared in a new way, especially between schools and school boards. In keeping with the emphasis on decentralization, schools have been granted more powers, and as a result, teachers have significantly broader powers in professional terms. The professional involvement of teachers is governed by two official documents. First, the *Education Act* states that teacher participation is required at the school and school board level with regard to certain aspects, and that teachers must be consulted when certain decisions are made. Second, the Québec-wide agreement negotiated between the government and the unions stipulates that some decisions with professional implications must be submitted to the teaching staff, using the voting mechanisms defined in the local collective agreements.[2]

The professional involvement of teachers has also been promoted at the provincial level by the creation of four bodies whose membership includes teachers:

1. the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement (CAPFE)
2. the Comité d'orientation de la formation et de la profession enseignante (COFPE)
3. the Commission des programmes d'études
4. the Comité d'évaluation des ressources didactiques

These four bodies play a mainly advisory role (except the CAPFE, which has responsibility for reviewing and accrediting elementary and secondary teacher training programs), and they give teachers a better opportunity to influence the guidelines and decisions made by the MEQ.

Since the implementation of Bill 180, teachers no longer act only in their classrooms. They have a greater number of responsibilities at the school and school board level, and are more frequently consulted on MEQ guidelines and decisions.

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1. Bill 180 became the *Act to amend the Education Act and other legislative provisions* (1997, c. 96).
2. Chapter 4-0.00: "Methods, subjects and procedures of participation of teachers other than the subjects (and their methods) negotiated and agreed upon at the provincial level."

Rapid development of research into teaching practices that places more emphasis on real-life teaching

The rapid development of education research, and especially of research into teaching practices, provides more support for the professionalization of teaching, by rationalizing the knowledge and skills applied in teaching, and by promoting the development of teaching expertise. The extremely broad scope of what is known as research into "teacher effectiveness" includes studies of various kinds to determine the variables that influence the effectiveness of teachers. One major branch of this research pays particular attention to the role of teaching practices in teacher effectiveness, and the research findings demonstrate their importance in ensuring student success.

According to this research, not all teachers have the same influence on the learning acquired by their students. In a similar context, and all other things being equal, some teachers help their students learn more. It is only since the 1970s that the importance of studying teaching practices in order to improve student learning has been fully recognized. Previously, the socio-economic background of students, for example, or the influence of the curriculum on student success, were the main focus of study, while the potential of teaching methods to improve student learning received little attention.

Research into teaching practices over the last 40 years has fostered recognition and development of a knowledge base for teaching. This knowledge base is made up of a set of teaching practices that have been documented and recognized as effective through research, and it also constitutes a set of strategies that can be used by teachers to reflect on and analyze their own practices.

The knowledge base for teaching has considerable importance for professionalization, since one of the criteria for a profession is that it be based on a corpus of rational knowledge. Without this corpus of knowledge, the effectiveness of a given teacher can only be justified on the basis of that teacher's knowledge and experience, and in this area few people can lay claim to any degree of authority. However, it is important to not fall into the trap of the "model teacher," or to believe that "ideal practices" should be applied by all teachers. The complexity of teaching situations must be taken into account, along with the fact that teachers do not apply methods, but rather take ownership of them and integrate them into their own teaching. From this point of view, all teaching situations are different, and all teaching practices are unique. In addition, it is by no means clear that a teaching practice that is effective in one situation will be as effective in all subjects.

or for all age groups, regardless of their specific characteristics. A knowledge base for teaching should be considered, instead, as a guide for action. In this way, the influence of sound practices can be maximized, even though the professional autonomy of teachers, the range of possible contexts and student groups, and the unique nature of each pedagogical interaction must be taken into account to reduce the risk of failure. In other words, the whole field of professional development for teachers depends on the development of research into teaching practices.

RESTORING THE VALUE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Restoring the value of the teaching profession is a key concern for several stakeholders in the education field, and it is also an important dimension in professionalization. Further to its consultations, the Conseil notes that the question of recognition for the teaching profession is still a contentious issue.

Although results of surveys must be viewed with caution, those conducted as part of the consultations held by the Conseil show that, overall, people trust teachers. In general, teaching is one of the professions most widely trusted by the general public and parents. There is also general recognition for teachers' competency, and the important influence their competency has on student success. Other views expressed reveal that teaching is still an attractive profession. Overall, the consultations show the relatively high value placed on the teaching profession by the general public.

However, the situation reflected in the surveys runs counter to the prevailing discourse, according to which the value of the teaching profession needs to be restored and does not enjoy the social recognition to which it is entitled. Apparently, teachers lack prestige, authority and credibility–or at least this is the feeling teachers express. They also feel they have to be on the defensive against the government, and are the victims of bias. Based on its analysis of the situation, the Conseil notes that teachers are highly sensitive to the image of their profession which, in their view, is negative; they consider that the expectations of the general public and of parents are simplistic and disproportionate. In other words, it appears that teachers find the public too critical of their work, failing to recognize the complexity of their task.

How can the gap between the apparently positive image of teachers in Québec society and the lack of recognition perceived by teachers be explained? Many different hypothetical explanations have been advanced by various bodies. The Conseil has not been able to assess, with any accuracy, the value of each hypothesis, but it has noted their existence and

their possible consequences on the status of the teaching profession. It considers that priority should be given to the aspects most likely to increase the intrinsic value placed on the teaching profession, in other words, from within the profession itself. For this reason, the Conseil has chosen to present guidelines and development priorities that focus on the empowerment of teachers, by stressing actions that can restore the power to act that they need in order to fulfill their duties. The Conseil considers that the development of the teaching profession must be based on a new emphasis on autonomy and responsibility.

THE PURSUIT OF A PROFESSIONAL IDEAL

As previously stated by the Conseil, professionalization involves moving collectively towards a professional ideal. By focusing on an ideal, the members of a profession can build a collective professional identity, and also their own individual professional identities. As the collective and individual identities are constructed, the parameters of the professional ideal evolve to accommodate them. In other words, the professional ideal has no separate existence. Instead, it is a social construct in a constantly evolving state, which is why it is so difficult to isolate its various parameters with any accuracy. However, a failure to name the parameters makes it impossible to reflect constructively on the nature of the profession. To progress towards a professional ideal, it is necessary to name its main components.

Despite the inherent difficulties, the Conseil has decided to outline the main points of the professional ideal for teachers, to better define what should, in its opinion, constitute the goal of development. This set of parameters represents the essential or fundamental elements of the teaching profession, and can be used to reflect on the nature of the profession and its future development.

In the view of the Conseil, to state that teaching is a profession means that:

- the act of teaching, the core act in a teacher's duties,
  - is a complex and interactive act that includes a fundamental cultural dimension
- teaching involves other actions that must be defined, such as
  - supervising trainee teachers
  - supporting newly appointed teachers
  - providing instruction for fellow teachers
  - preparing teaching materials
  - coordinating shared projects
  - taking part in education research, etc.

- all the actions that make up a teacher's duties
  - must be based on knowledge and skills
    - derived from practical teaching experience and from theories developed as part of education research
    - comprising disciplinary, didactic and pedagogical aspects
  - must be governed by professional standards, in other words, a set of competencies for which a threshold level of mastery is a condition for teaching, and which
    - are embodied in basic teacher training and ongoing professional development for teachers
    - are updated on an ongoing basis to take into account new developments in the profession and in society, and the findings of education research
  - must be taken into account by teachers when reflecting on their teaching practices and developing their competencies throughout their careers
  - must require teachers to exercise their professional judgment and critical faculties
  - must require an ability to work individually, and as part of a team
  - must be accomplished with autonomy and responsibility
- teaching has a fundamental ethical dimension, since it is both a public service and a profession that involve human interaction; teachers must exercise moral judgment
  - first, when interpreting their duties; the educational role of teachers must be based on the values, mission and ultimate objectives of the Québec school system
  - second, on a daily basis, when interacting with students and other partners in the education system
- teachers must establish a professional relationship with the other education players, based on recognition of their respective expertise and on a genuine level of partnership, depending on their respective duties
- teachers must be able to contribute to the development of the school system, both within their own schools, and at the school board and MEQ level
- teachers must be able to take part in the major social debates that concern education and help define the duties of teachers with regard to their students
- teachers must be able to help define and manage all the supervisory measures for the teaching profession, because they are in the best position to assess their relevance in terms of the duties they perform and the conditions under which the teaching profession is exercised

These parameters should, in the view of the Conseil, form the basis for the ongoing development of the teaching profession.

II. DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN TERMS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION AND THE RESTORING OF ITS VALUE: IDENTIFYING KEY GUIDELINES

To help teaching progress towards a professional ideal for which the parameters are now better defined, to ensure that the value of teachers is recognized by Québec society, and to encourage teachers to develop a feeling of competency and pride in their work, the Conseil proposes three guidelines to form the basis for eight priority development areas. The first guideline concerns the quality of the next generation of teachers, the second concerns the need to support teachers as they develop their professional competencies on an ongoing basis, as well as to recognize their expertise, and the third concerns the importance of embedding professionalization in the exercise of the profession and in its management.

Guideline 1: Ensure the quality of the next generation of teachers by setting high professional standards for the teaching profession

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 1: DEVELOP RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING TO OPEN UP NEW TEACHER TRAINING PATHS

The Conseil heard calls from several organizations for a return to a two-stage teacher training model,[3] made up of subject-specific training followed by a shorter period of pedagogical training, similar to Québec's former teacher training procedure. These calls were based on two main concerns: an impending shortage of teachers in certain subjects; and a perceived lack of subject-specific competencies among secondary-school teachers graduating under the new teacher training procedure.

The observations made and arguments presented cannot, in the view of the Conseil, support such broad generalizations. However, the Conseil recognizes that a lack of flexibility in the teacher training procedure may discourage some candidates from applying despite their obvious potential.

The Conseil wishes to stress, primarily, that the current teacher training procedure results from a desire to strengthen the integration of theoretical

3. Under the two-stage teacher training model, students generally studied their teaching subject first, and then took a shorter course in pedagogy. The pedagogy course lasted one year in the former Québec teacher training programs.

and practical knowledge, and introduce closer ties between subject-specific, pedagogical and didactic knowledge. The new programs were designed using a competency-based approach. Despite some of the criticisms voiced by the organizations consulted, the Conseil considers that the concurrent training model,[4] as used in the current teacher training procedure, is the most conducive to the development of the profession, even though further improvements can still be made.

Preserving the current concurrent training model

The Conseil considers that the arguments relating to a shortage of teachers in some sectors do not justify a return to the former system of short pedagogy programs. The recruitment difficulties observed seem to be local or regional, and are connected to the problem of mobility, which would not be solved by the creation of short pedagogy programs. In addition, studies are being conducted in the United States to assess the effectiveness of various types of teacher training, including short programs, especially with regard to the problem of attrition. In brief, it appears that teachers who begin teaching after completing a short program are more likely to leave the profession than those who complete a full-length program. The final conclusions of the studies are not yet available, but the preliminary findings indicate that caution is necessary.

Another reason the Conseil does not wish to see a return to short pedagogy programs is that it believes that the current training model, based on concurrent studies and a competency-based approach, must be preserved. The Conseil believes that teachers must acquire specific teaching expertise that, in concrete terms, depends on the mastery of professional competencies that are acquired in complex, integrated training situations.

Diversify teacher training paths while preserving high professional standards

The Conseil is more receptive to the arguments presented by various organizations concerning the single access route to the teaching profession. It heard a range of testimony showing that many promising candidates are excluded from the profession because they are discouraged by the lack of flexibility in the four-year model.

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4. Under the concurrent teacher training model, students study their teaching subject and receive pedagogical training at the same time.

The most common situation is that of a graduate from a bachelor's degree program in a specific subject who, despite the existence of a process to recognize university-level credits,[5] must still undertake a four-year program in order to obtain a teaching licence. The main obstacle to accelerating the process lies in the actual structure of the programs, which include prerequisite courses and practicums at specified points in time. Even though the university recognizes candidates' prior learning, particularly in their specialized subject, they must still go through the entire four-year program. In this case, the total duration of the program is the factor that appears to discourage some candidates.

Other situations call for a more flexible approach to teacher training paths to provide new access points, for example, if an accountant wants to teach mathematics or if a childcare worker wants to become an elementary school teacher. These situations are, in fact, more complex because non-academic prior learning, rather than just course credits, must be recognized. The candidates possess, in terms of the reference framework for teaching competencies, experiential learning[6] for which it is harder to obtain recognition from a university. The need to complete a four-year course in order to obtain a teaching licence may also discourage these candidates, who will be forced to learn many things they already know.

The Conseil has learned that the universities, at the request of the Table de concertation MEQ-universités, have agreed to set up a bridging provision for graduates from certain single-subject degree programs who wish to teach at the secondary level. This provision will create an accelerated path[7] for the Bachelor of Education degree in secondary education in certain subjects. The Conseil supports this approach, but wishes to take the process one step further. It believes that the principles of recognition for prior learning can be applied in the field of basic teacher training to allow the creation of differentiated paths.

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5. Universities in Quebec have tools to respond to applications for recognition for credits earned in other universities or other programs, but the procedure and requirements may vary from one university to the next.
6. Experiential learning: learning gained through employment or everyday living.
7. An accelerated path would still be based on a concurrent model, but would give quicker access to the teaching licence than the current four-year program.

The Conseil has already asked the Minister to recognize the following three principles:

- **First principle:** all persons are entitled to social recognition of their learning; however, it is incumbent upon them to prove that they have acquired such learning.
- **Second principle:** persons are not required to repeat learning they have already acquired; in the recognition of learning, the important thing is what the person has learned and not where, when or how it has been learned.
- **Third principle:** all prior learning recognition systems must be transparent (CSE, 2000a, p. 16).

In keeping with these principles, any differentiated paths established for teacher training programs will necessarily require the creation of a procedure for recognizing prior academic and experiential learning. In fact, the professional standards for teaching should be used as a reference framework for deciding whether or not to recognize the prior learning and experience of prospective teacher training candidates. The principles outlined above also point to greater flexibility in the teacher training structure, to allow candidates whose existing competencies have been recognized to take only the training they need and pass more quickly through the teacher training procedure.

Considering:

- the various ways in which teaching is perceived in Québec, particularly within the education system, and the tensions created in organizational terms
- the growing consensus that teaching is primarily a profession
- the importance of using the current reference framework for teaching competencies not just for teacher training, but for the profession as a whole
- the fact that the concurrent training model, and the competency-based approach, must be retained
- the need to offer a wider range of paths for teacher training
- the relevance of the principles for the recognition of prior learning defined by the Conseil in its brief on the subject published in 2000

the Conseil recommends

that the Minister of Education

1. **underline the fact that teaching is a profession that can only be exercised once specific teaching expertise has been acquired, that, in concrete terms, depends on the mastery of professional competencies**
2. **establish "professional standards"[8] for the teaching profession to specify the threshold levels of competency needed to enter the profession and to teach**
3. **see to the preparation and implementation of a mechanism for recognizing prior academic and experiential learning[9]**
   a. **that certifies the acquisition of competencies, having regard to the relevant professional standards, regardless of how they were acquired by the student**
   b. **that allows students to complete only the missing training they need to join the teaching profession**

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 2: INCREASE THE PACE AT WHICH CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURE AND CONTENT OF BASIC TEACHER TRAINING ARE INTRODUCED

Basic teacher training has undergone a far-reaching transformation over the last 10 years. The training procedure itself has been substantially modified, and the various players involved in basic teacher training have also begun to move towards more strongly affirmed partnerships.

The Conseil recognizes that the universities have made a major effort to introduce the changes to basic teacher training and that have not yet come into full fruition. Studies have shown that, overall, employers are satisfied with the work of the first cohort of graduates from the four-year bachelor's degree program, at both the elementary and secondary levels. The consultations undertaken by the Conseil, however, show that the teacher training reform has not yet been fully implemented. It therefore considers that implementation must continue, but that more attention must be paid to the points with which the school communities are still dissatisfied.

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8. In other words, a set of competencies for which a threshold level of mastery would be considered as necessary for teaching.

9. "... when used in connection with the recognition of prior learning, 'experiential learning' generally refers to learning acquired through employment or daily living experiences, and to learning that was not planned or sought, since the experiences themselves had other objectives." (Landry, 1997, quoted in CSE, 2000a, p. 117).

Dissatisfaction with regard to the teacher training procedure

The main points on which the Conseil noted dissatisfaction concerned the universities, which have general responsibility for teacher training. For example,

- teacher training providers have not yet completely integrated the reform of the education system into their courses
- the program-based approach and competency-based instruction have not been fully assimilated, as reflected in a lack of coordination between the departments responsible for program design, and the absence of a consistent pedagogical approach to competency-based programs
- difficulties have been experienced in the way practical training is supervised by the schools and education faculties concerned

These points reveal a gap between the spirit of the new, competency-based teacher training programs, and the training currently provided by the universities. The Conseil considers that the criticism also reflects two ambiguities connected with basic teacher training.

The first ambiguity involves the role played by the universities, which seems to oscillate between two poles. Some universities consider that basic teacher training should reflect the spirit of the education reform, and prepare teachers to practise their profession within the framework defined by the reform. Other universities, though, consider that the goal is to train teachers who will be able to teach while assimilating the inevitable changes introduced in the education system. The view of the Conseil is that basic teacher training must not only prepare teachers to practise their profession in the current educational and social context, but also to adapt to any future changes. For this reason, it considers that a balance must necessarily be found between the two poles. This question does not just concern teacher training, but all professional training programs. For example, should aerospace engineers be trained to use only the current technologies, or should they be prepared to deal with the ongoing technological changes in their sector and to apply new developments? The answer to this question is clear, and should apply without modification to teacher training.

The second ambiguity is related to the first, and involves the dual role of instructor and researcher played by teacher training providers, and on the actual exit profile targeted by basic teacher training.

First, the Conseil recognizes that university researchers need to enjoy academic freedom, and that it is a basic condition for conducting research

activities. From this point of view, the education reform, in terms of both its underlying rationale and the pedagogical methods it generates, can and must be subjected to university research and scrutiny. However, the Conseil also believes that teacher training providers must recognize the new conditions for exercising the profession and the supervisory measures to which their students will be subject by law. The reform currently implemented at the elementary and secondary levels is not optional: it is prescribed by law, and imposes duties on education players. For this reason, the Conseil considers that the training providers must find a better balance between necessary criticism of supervisory mechanisms and the conditions for practising the teaching profession (in their role as researchers) and an ethical commitment towards the teachers of the future, who must be provided with the tools they need to practise their profession in an environment that is determined and whose characteristics are known (in their role as teacher training providers).

Second, the Conseil believes that teacher training providers must clarify the exit profile that determines the professional competencies students are expected to have mastered when they complete their basic training. In their dual role as instructors and researchers, teacher training providers are responsible for training future education researchers as well as future teachers. Since the nature and characteristics of these two professions (teacher and education researcher) are so different, the competencies students are expected to master at the end of their training are clearly distinct.

The Conseil considers that the universities should clarify their position concerning the function of teacher training, the ethical requirements of the dual role of instructor and researcher played by teacher training providers, and the definition of exit profiles. Finally, the Conseil considers that realistic expectations concerning basic teacher training should be clarified. Teacher training is the foundation on which new teachers will build their careers. This means that schools cannot expect new teachers to have the same depth of competency as experienced teachers, and that the ongoing development of professional competencies must be made possible as part of a teaching career. All this calls for a period of reflection on the respective contributions made by universities and schools to the basic training and ongoing professional development of teachers.

Criticism concerning the content of teacher training

Other concerns have been raised about the content of teacher training. It has been stated, for example, that

- basic training should prepare future teachers more effectively to deal with a wide range of social backgrounds and family situations
- the training given to new teachers in academic subjects under the new procedure is insufficient
- the new programs do not provide enough training in subject-specific didactics
- the competencies acquired by new teachers in the language of instruction are insufficient

The Conseil has not carried out any studies of the composition of the new teacher training programs and it therefore cannot corroborate these statements. However, the testimony given by several organizations leads it to consider that they are of importance. First, with regard to the range of social backgrounds and family situations that teachers will encounter, the Conseil suggests that the universities should review their programs in light of the two following observations:

- Québec society contains a wide range of social backgrounds and family situations. This is a reality that must be faced, and teachers must be given the tools they need to deal with it.
- Since education is a public service, teacher training must equip future teachers to meet the needs of all students in Québec, whatever their individual characteristics.

Next, concerning the subject-specific and didactic training provided, the Conseil recognizes a long-standing debate. The underlying question concerns the amount of subject-specific knowledge needed to teach a given subject. Does a chemist need more advanced training in chemistry than a chemistry teacher? How much training in chemistry is considered necessary for a chemistry teacher? To lay to rest the recurrent concerns about the extent of the subject-specific and didactic knowledge needed to teach, the Conseil suggests that subject-specific and didactic competency thresholds should be established for the elementary and secondary levels, in all subjects, and that trainee teachers should be required to meet the thresholds by the time they graduate. The debate will then shift to the nature of the subject-specific and didactic competencies required and the threshold levels for teaching, given that mastery of a given subject can be pursued over a lifetime.

The charge that new teachers lack proficiency in the language of instruction constitutes a problem that needs to be examined in detail. This is a favourite topic in daily newspapers, and one that undermines the efforts to restore the value of the teaching profession. Currently, the Conseil is not in a position to judge the existence or extent of the alleged lack of proficiency in the language of instruction, but it recognizes that this is an important question and one that receives more attention than teachers' competency in mathematics, science, pedagogy or any other area. The need for a teacher to master the language of instruction, whether French or English, is self-evident. In recent years, several measures have been implemented to raise the quality of the language used by future teachers. For example, a basic competency has been inserted into the reference framework for teaching competencies, tests in the language of instruction have been introduced, along with catch-up courses for future teachers, and pre-hiring exams have been established by school boards. However, despite all these measures, concerns remain about a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction. The Conseil considers that the current situation should be examined in detail. It also considers that for competency in the language of instruction, as for all the other competencies needed to teach, clear and compulsory threshold levels should be established for trainee teachers on graduation.

Considering:

- that teacher training constitutes an ethical commitment towards future teachers, who will have to deal with the actual conditions in which teaching takes place
- that it is difficult to strike a balance, in basic teacher training, between training based on the actual exercise of the profession and that based on criticism of the conditions in which it is exercised
- the need to ensure that Québec has a highly qualified body of teachers able to provide effective instruction, while taking into account the range of student types and social and family situations encountered by teachers
- the fact that the subject-specific training received by new teachers must be closely monitored, in the same way as didactic and pedagogical training
- the need to examine all the measures introduced over the last ten years to raise the competency level of future teachers in the language of instruction, and to assess the actual effect of the measures

the Conseil recommends

that the Minister of Education

4. with regard to professional standards for the teaching profession,

a. introduce competencies that will allow future teachers to take into account the range of student types and social and family situations they will encounter, and establish the necessary thresholds concerning the level of mastery

b. define the subject-specific competencies required for teaching, in all subjects, particularly in the language of instruction, and establish the necessary thresholds concerning the level of mastery

that the Minister of Education, in collaboration with universities, colleges and school boards,

5. assess the actual effect of the existing set of measures designed to ensure the competency of future teachers in the language of instruction, and establish an integrated strategy in this area

that education faculties

6. take note of the concerns and dissatisfaction expressed by schools, and take the necessary steps to ensure that teacher training graduates are better prepared for the current and future exercise of the teaching profession

that universities

7. raise the language of instruction requirements for students seeking admission to teacher training programs

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 3: ENSURE THAT ONLY FULLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS ARE HIRED AND ASSIGNED TO SCHOOLS, EVEN IF LOCAL OR REGIONAL RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES EXIST

The difficulty of recruiting teachers relates directly to the quality of educational services. The Conseil considers that the hiring of insufficiently qualified teachers could jeopardize the quality of the educational services dispensed and discredit the teaching profession. The question of teacher recruitment must therefore be examined carefully.

One of the issues most frequently raised during the consultation process organized by the Conseil was regarding a shortage of teachers. On many different occasions, recruitment problems were mentioned, along with an actual, or feared, shortage of teachers. However, MEQ data show that, overall, there is no shortage of teachers, although the number of teachers available in some subject areas at the secondary level is limited.

The Conseil has formulated several hypotheses that may explain this apparent shortage. They are based on the existence of a discrepancy between the overall situation in the province and the actual situation in certain regions.

First, although the number of teachers available province-wide appears to be sufficient, their geographic distribution does not necessarily match regional hiring needs. This is also true for student teachers studying in the major cities, whose future place of work is unknown.

Second, the recruitment of teachers by some school boards may be affected by specific problems, for example, in the following cases.

- The student population is growing in around 10 school board districts and the school boards concerned must recruit more teachers, not only to replace teachers who retire, but also to deal with increased enrollment.
- Some schools, urban neighbourhoods or regions may be affected by personnel movements (from disadvantaged to advantaged schools, from remote regions to urban centres, etc.).
- Several schools have difficulty recruiting supply staff or part-time teachers. Some of the organizations consulted reported an increase in applications for leave for various reasons (salary deferral schemes, maternity or paternity leave, sick leave, etc.), more time off for extra training on the education reform, and more requests for part-time schedules. A more in-depth analysis is needed to determine the extent of these trends and their actual effect on the recruitment of supply staff and part-time teachers.

Last, the Conseil wonders whether the use of employment priority lists[10] and the "competency criterion"[11] affects the ability of school boards to hire the most qualified candidates to fill open positions. The Conseil is aware of the need for a mechanism that ensures fairness in the distribution of regular positions, a need that is met by the employment priority lists. The "competency criterion" is also a legitimate management measure, since it introduces a level of flexibility into the assignment process. However, the Conseil considers that the effect of the two mechanisms on the balance between the training and assignment of teachers should be studied.

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10. Potential candidates for permanent positions are entered on the lists. The rules governing the management of the list are negotiated at the local level.
11. The "competency criterion" must be met by a teacher wishing to obtain a position outside his or her teaching field.

With regard to recruitment difficulties, the Conseil has noted that no province-wide teacher shortage has been forecast by the MEQ, but that difficulties exist at the regional and local levels. The Conseil considers that the question of recruitment should be given priority, because it could have a major impact on the quality of the educational services received by the students. Vigilance is necessary to ensure that recruitment difficulties do not lead to the hiring of under-qualified staff.

Considering that

- although no Québec-wide shortage of teaching staff has been forecast, local or regional recruitment difficulties have been reported in certain regions and subject areas
- the supply and demand process for teaching staff must take into account various facts, including
  - the recruitment of mathematics and science teachers
  - the situation of school boards with increasing enrollment
  - schools with particular profiles:
    - schools in disadvantaged areas
    - schools in remote or rural regions
    - schools with a specific training project
  - an increase in the leave granted and the number of part-time positions, reported by several organizations, and the possible effects of the increase on teacher recruitment difficulties
- the use of employment priority lists and the "competency criterion" should not have a negative impact on the balance between training and assignment and the quality of educational services

the Conseil recommends
that school boards and local unions

8. **integrate professional standards for the teaching profession into their teacher assignment process**
9. **ensure that professional standards are taken into account even during periods of recruitment difficulty**

Guideline 2:
Support teachers' ongoing development of professional competencies and officially recognize this expertise

In its second guideline, the Conseil states the need to establish conditions conducive to the ongoing development of professional competencies by teachers, based on the needs they encounter during their career. The Conseil considers that official recognition should be given for the expertise developed by teachers, in keeping with the emphasis on the professionalization and restored value of teaching. For this purpose, it suggests three priority development areas, concerning the need to supervise the entry of new graduates into the profession, the need for teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development, and the need to develop genuine career paths for teachers.

Priority development area no. 4:
Supervise the entry of new teachers into the profession to ensure fairness, and consider their basic training as the entry threshold for the teaching profession

During the consultation process established by the Conseil, several organizations stressed the importance of entry into the teaching profession and the need for a mechanism to make it easier for new teachers to enter the profession. Currently, the entry procedure is not conducive to the development of professional competencies by new teachers, or to the provision of high-quality instruction for students.

The entry problem is serious, and reflects the lack of recognition for the teaching profession. It has two main aspects, which sometimes affect new teachers simultaneously. The first is the lack of job security. Over the last 40 years, the ease with which new graduates have been able to find a position has varied greatly. During the 1960s and 1970s, it was easy for new graduates to find a regular position, since the development of a universal education system led to an explosion in the demand for teachers and many regular positions became available. Beginning in the 1980s, the situation became more difficult, since there were more graduates than positions available. From the early 1980s to the mid 1990s, newly qualified teachers had no job security, a situation that often lasted for several years, and many simply left the profession after years of fruitless searching for a permanent position. Until the mid 1990s, this over-supply of teachers led to long periods of low job security for new teachers. Since the mid 1990s, various measures have helped to improve the employment situation.

In general, it is fair to state that the period of little or no job security has been reduced considerably over the last 20 years. What has not changed, though, is the fact that new entrants never enjoy job security. In Québec, entry to the profession is not assured through competitions, or access to regular positions. In addition, even though the waiting period for gaining access to a position has been reduced, it is estimated that new graduates still have to wait three or four years before qualifying for a full-time position, after which they only gain tenure on signing their third annual full-time contract.

Even after obtaining tenure, new teachers often have to deal with heavy workloads due to the assignment process. In many cases, teaching positions are assigned on the basis of length of service, which means that newly qualified teachers are at the bottom of the list and are assigned to the remaining, and often least attractive, positions.

In the view of the Conseil, the difficulties of the entry process raise three main problems.

1. Workload equity: the Conseil considers that there is often an imbalance between the workloads of new teachers and those of experienced teachers, given their respective competencies.
2. Teaching quality: the Conseil considers that basic teacher training does not prepare teachers sufficiently to face the worst conditions in the profession. A new teacher having to face an overly complex task is unable to consolidate the competencies that he or she began to develop in basic training.
3. Retention of new teachers: in Québec, it was estimated in 1998 that about 17% of teachers left the profession in the first five years. Is the "teacher dropout rate" a problem in Québec? Should a certain percentage be considered normal? What is the retention rate in other sectors of activity? All these questions must be answered before an enlightened judgment can be made. However, it is already possible to formulate the hypothesis that at least some of these new teachers would not have left the profession if they had received more support when they started teaching.

The Conseil believes that entry into the profession must be considered as a normal and legitimate stage in the career of a professional teacher. If basic training constitutes the threshold for entry into the profession, entry should be seen as a collective responsibility and not as the sole responsibility of the new teacher. From this point of view, entry should be considered as part of

the career diversification process, in the sense that the task of mentoring new teachers should be recognized, that this task should become compulsory, and that mentoring expertise should be developed by the members of the teaching team and shared between them.
Similarly, based on the principle of workload equity, diversification must be reflected in real life by a sharing of tasks based on the actual capacity of each teacher to ensure the quality of the educational services provided. The most complex tasks should be the most highly valued, since they require the greatest professional competencies. They should be taken on by the most experienced teachers, be officially recognized, and be provided with appropriate support.
The Conseil considers that a more firmly supported entry process would make the teaching profession more attractive, and more highly valued. Recognition for the importance of supporting new teachers would lead to recognition for the complexity and difficulty of teaching, and highlight the importance placed on the quality of the educational services dispensed to students. Similarly, a failure to take into account the inexperience of new teachers amounts to a failure to recognize the value of the experience of working teachers in terms of their ability to take on complex tasks.

Considering:

- the high rate of staff turnover in schools
- the fact that entry into the profession is a normal and necessary stage in a teacher's development
- the importance of basing entry into the profession on the principle of equity, and of considering basic teacher training as the threshold for entry into the profession
- the fact that a difficult entry period leads to a drop in the quality of the services provided, when the difficulties of the workload exceed a new teacher's actual capacities, creates a feeling of worthlessness and sometimes results in the teacher leaving the profession
- that school principals have a duty, as prescribed by law, to ensure that the educational services provided at the school meet the proper standards of quality
- that teachers have a duty, as prescribed by law, to "collaborate ... in the mentoring of newly qualified teachers"

the Conseil recommends

that the Minister of Education

10. establish measures to support the entry of new teachers, especially those with no job security, in all schools and school boards

that school boards and school principals

11. determine ways to implement the measures aimed at new teaching staff to ensure that all actions taken are relevant and effective, drawing inspiration from successful current approaches, the expertise developed by teachers, and ongoing research into the entry into the teaching profession

12. when assigning positions and allocating tasks to new teachers in a given school, take into account the teachers' actual level of competency, in terms of their ability to ensure the quality of the educational services they provide

that the teachers in a given school

13. consider the mentoring needs of their new colleagues and work with the principal to implement appropriate support measures

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 5: ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the reasons for considering teaching a profession is that it involves complex, and constantly evolving, challenges that require teachers to continuously update their professional competencies. Many countries also recognize the need to ensure that teaching practices are developed on an ongoing basis to support changes to the school system and increase student success rates.

Recent research on professional development for teachers, together with MEQ guidelines on this topic, show that the heart of the question concerns the ability of teachers to take charge of their own professional development. In the view of the Conseil, this constitutes an important key for restoring the value of the profession and the quality of the services provided in schools, both now and in the future.

In general, the stakeholders consulted by the Conseil agree on the fact that a new approach to professional development is needed. For many organizations, professional development is closely linked to the question of professional

identity and competency, and could provide the refresher training needed to reduce the disillusionment felt by teachers. Other organizations see it as a lever for the professionalization of teaching and as a strategy to encourage organizational change. Some consider that professional development should be compulsory, while others think it should be voluntary. All agree, however, that its importance should be recognized. However, the organizations queried the actual degree of access teachers have to professional development and, especially, its relevance in terms of their actual needs.

The Conseil believes that it is important to find ways to allow teachers to take charge of their own professional development, and makes the following suggestions in this connection.

Ensure that training needs are clearly expressed as part of an organized approach to professional development

The Conseil believes that teachers must focus on clearly and systematically expressing their training needs. This is a key challenge, since there is a difference between vaguely expressed wishes and an actual taking charge of professional development by teachers. In the view of the Conseil, the following three parameters should be taken into account when training needs are expressed:

1. existing measures: the reference framework for professional competency, the prescribed education programs, etc.
2. the context in which teachers work: the characteristics and priorities of Quebec schools, the needs of students, projects organized individually or in groups
3. the degree of individual competency achieved

The question of ensuring that the training needs of adult education teachers are clearly expressed is one of the current concerns of the Conseil's Commission de l'éducation des adultes. This is based on the conviction that training should be adapted to the training needs and aspirations of the adult learners rather than the teachers, and that training needs must be made explicit and must be taken into consideration. Ways must be found to assess the current degree of mastery of a set of professional competencies, to plan activities in order to reach the desired degree of mastery, and to assess the overall process both in terms of the approach used and the results achieved. The Conseil stresses the importance of developing the tools required to allow teachers to take charge of their own professional development, both in terms of the approach applied and way training needs are expressed, taking account current experience in this area.

Improve access by teachers to a wide range of training activities to develop their competencies

Teachers must be able to choose from a wide range of activities to select those they need to develop their competencies. Besides the professional development activities offered by school boards, many other training opportunities exist: pedagogical development, peer training, research involvement, the mentoring of new and trainee teachers, documentary research, etc. The key point is that all these activities must be part of a planned process designed to allow teachers to learn and, more broadly, develop on a professional level.

The Conseil considers that teachers can develop their competencies in many different ways, provided the activities are made available and that the teachers can reinvest what they have learned in their teaching. From this point of view, the acquisition of a self-analysis competency through the professional development process is of primary importance.

Use collective pedagogical projects for professional development purposes

After consulting groups of teachers involved in a collective pedagogical project, the Conseil considers that the potential of the projects can be exploited for professional development purposes, because

1. collective projects have already been established in schools to meet the needs of students
2. the education reform promotes the development of a collegial approach between schools, and an increase in collaborative work is to be expected
3. collective projects, in addition to their benefits for student learning, allow teachers to develop professional competencies

The results of the consultation process show that teachers have reported some of the key impacts of collective projects on their teaching practices, and that beyond the actual pedagogical objectives of the projects, they also generated individual and group reflections about pedagogical practice. In other words, the projects can become the basis for a process to transform teaching practices.

Focus on the individual and collective responsibility of teachers

MEQ guidelines for the professional development of teachers clearly assign individual and joint responsibility to the teachers themselves. Under the *Education Act*, teachers must maintain their professional competencies, meaning that they must be engaged in a professional development process. They must also determine their training needs on the basis of their personal needs, and the needs and priority of the school in which they work. In addition, training needs must be defined collectively by each school team. Professional development is therefore both an individual and a collective process. Moreover, teachers must assess the outcome of the professional development process and suggest improvements.

School principals are required to consult teachers concerning their training needs, inform the school board of the needs and organize professional development activities. The *Education Act* states that principals are responsible for ensuring that education services in their school meet the proper standards of quality. Under MEQ guidelines, principals are responsible for monitoring and evaluating individual and collective training projects.

In the view of the Conseil, all of these points must be embodied in concrete measures. The primary responsibility of teachers is to be engaged in a professional development process, which can vary in terms of its objectives, the resources and activities it involves, and the pace at which new competencies are developed. It is clear to the Conseil, however, that all teachers must be engaged in a professional development process that is significant for them and that they report their progress to their school principal, who is responsible for ensuring the quality of the educational services provided to students.

Considering:

- that the *Education Act* stipulates that teachers must "take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism"
- the need to ensure that teachers take charge of their own professional development
- the fact that individual and collective responsibility of teachers could be used as a lever to ensure that teachers take charge of their own professional development
- the need to ensure that teachers' training needs are clearly expressed if a rigorous professional development process is to be established

- the importance of using a wide range of activities and the potential offered by collective pedagogical projects to develop teachers' competencies
- the fact that pedagogical supervision by school principals gives teachers an opportunity to report on the progress made in terms of professional development

the Conseil recommends

that teachers

14. define flexible individual professional development plans that reflect their personal and professional needs, and also the needs and priorities of their school, and report on their progress to the school principal

that school principals, in collaboration with their school team,

15. establish a professional development plan for their school that sets priorities for the training activities requested from the school board, and monitor its implementation

that school principals

16. ensure that teachers have access to a wide range of learning activities that allow teachers, individually and collectively, to take charge of the process to develop their competencies

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 6: ESTABLISH GENUINE CAREER PATHS FOR TEACHERS

The Conseil considers that the establishment of career paths to allow the recognition, development and sharing of teachers' expertise would increase both the social standing and the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Currently, a teaching career offers few possibilities for diversification, apart from horizontal moves such as changing classes or schools, but this still involves the same work, namely teaching students. A handful of possibilities do exist, such as a move to become an educational advisor, a pedagogical coordinator at a school board or a school principal, or a temporary position on secondment to the MEQ.

However, an inquiry by the Conseil in 1991 showed that elementary and secondary school teachers would be interested in career diversification proposals that involve tasks other than teaching. The Conseil does not, however, wish to give the impression that teaching is a boring or routine task. On the contrary, it considers that it is a unique, complex act that is a

major source of professional enrichment. However, a diversification of the tasks performed by teachers would encourage them to develop and share other expertise.

Many teachers already volunteer to perform functions apart from classroom teaching, often for little recognition. While they sometimes offer minimal compensation, they are mostly performed by individuals who have a passionate interest in a particular theme who find that they offer an indispensable bonus to their profession. To what extent, however, is their expertise reinvested more broadly in the education system? How can the education system recognize and benefit from this expertise as it tries to meet the needs of students and ensure their success? The Conseil considers that more work needs to be done in this area.

In the view of the Conseil, career and task diversification is a necessary step towards the professionalization of teaching. One of the conditions for professionalization is recognition for teachers' expertise, which involves rationalizing the knowledge on which it is based, determining the competencies needed to exercise the task involved, and reinvesting the competencies in basic and ongoing professional development training to ensure that the expertise can be developed and put to use.

In this way, over time, teachers can develop expertise that must be rationalized and shared to allow all students to benefit from it. A constant search for greater teacher effectiveness is one of the requirements of professionalization. Job diversification for teachers could also help establish a better interface between teaching and university research, since supervising trainee teachers and participating in research projects, for example, are activities that teachers almost always pursue in partnership with a university.

The Conseil therefore recommends that all the duties performed by teachers should be rationalized and recognized. This would involve two types of process. First, genuine teaching career paths would have to be organized; second, the reference framework for teaching competencies would have to be broadened to include all the duties performed by teachers. The Conseil considers that various possible ways to organize teaching careers should be examined. They could include the creation of separate positions, accessible through competitions, with a separate pay scale, or the establishment of salary bonuses to recognize the expertise of teachers who master the competencies needed to take up new duties.

Considering:

- that the world of teaching involves several duties that go beyond and enrich the act of teaching
- the need to provide official recognition for
  - all the duties performed by teachers, in keeping with the emphasis on the professionalization and the restoring of the value of teaching
  - the fact that the level of mastery required in various professional competencies varies depending on the position held
- the impact of the development of new duties on
  - basic training and the development of professional competencies
  - cooperation and partnerships developed between universities and schools
  - the quality of the services provided by teachers in performing all their duties

the Conseil recommends
that the Minister of Education

17. introduce diversification into the positions held by teachers, by

a. establishing competency profiles for teaching that group all the duties performed by teachers, based on job analyses and relevant research into teaching practices

b. providing official recognition for the range of duties performed by teachers, using various possible approaches such as

- **a wider range of possibilities for teacher release[12] to take into account the actual weighting of the duties performed by teachers**
- **the development of formulas for service loans between schools, school boards, socioeconomic organizations and the MEQ, to ensure the pooling of expertise and promote partnerships between the various stakeholders in the world of education**
- **the creation of specific positions, accessible through competitions, for the performance of duties that are significantly more complex, in other words, duties that require a wider range or higher level of professional competencies, and the provision of suitable pay scales**

12. Teacher release is an administrative measure that releases teachers from some or all of their teaching duties to devote their time to other activities connected to teaching.

that universities

18. extend the scope of their research into teaching practices to include all the duties performed by teachers, in order to set up a knowledge base to cover all duties

Guideline 3: Continue to promote professionalization of teaching in the way the profession is exercised and managed

The Conseil considers that more emphasis is placed on the professionalization of teaching in basic training than in the way the profession is currently exercised and managed. The orientations for basic teacher training have, since the reform of the teacher training programs in 1994, been based on a vision of teachers as professionals. Even though–as shown elsewhere by the Conseil–basic teacher training still requires some improvement, the principles on which it is based are relatively clear and recognized by all stakeholders. However, the way the profession is organized, in terms of both day-to-day teaching and teaching management, are not as clearly structured around the idea of professionalization. The Conseil suggests two priority areas for development to allow teachers to take greater responsibility for the profession, both in terms of daily work organization and management of the profession itself.

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 7: SUPPORT THE AUTONOMY OF TEACHERS IN THE WAY THEY ORGANIZE THEIR WORK, AND DEFINE THE PARAMETERS OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Conseil considers that, by placing more emphasis on teachers' autonomy and responsibility, the social prestige of teaching, and a feeling of competency among teachers, would both be increased. By taking full advantage of the professional latitude they enjoy, teachers exercise greater control over the way their work is organized and are able to take the lead in pedagogical matters. In addition, by accepting the idea of accountability, teachers accept the need to recognize their expertise and that of other stakeholders, revealing the full extent of their expertise and the complexity of their duties.

Two types of actions must be undertaken. First, it is important for teachers to be given a greater degree of control over the way their work is organized; second, it is important to establish accountability mechanisms to promote recognition of teachers' competency.

Take full advantage of the current provisions for professional autonomy

The Conseil considers that teachers must be able to use all their existing leeway to create optimal learning conditions for students. The reform offers a special opportunity for the implementation of new approaches, because of the emphasis it places on a collegial spirit and teachers' expertise and autonomy. Professional autonomy must be exercised not only in the organization of day-to-day teaching work, but also in relations with other stakeholders, including parents, and in the participatory mechanisms provided for certain objectives in the *Education Act*.

Define the parameters of professional responsibility

Greater professional autonomy goes hand-in-hand with the obligation of accountability. However, it is first necessary to define the responsibilities for which teachers are accountable. What exactly are teachers responsible for? The Conseil considers that their basic responsibility should be defined as an obligation of competency, with a corollary obligation to be accountable for their competency.

Rather than an obligation of results or of means, the Conseil prefers an obligation of competency, one that is more in line with section 22 of the *Education Act*, which specifies that teachers must "take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism" (section 22). An obligation of competency focuses on a teacher's choice of methods, in other words, on his or her expertise. The obligation, therefore, is linked to the quality of the methods employed, rather than on the results achieved. Behind the obligation of maintaining their level of competency lie the twin questions of ongoing professional development and the assessment of competency, in other words, teacher evaluations.

The Conseil considers that the obligation of competency stipulated in the *Education Act* requires the implementation of mechanisms to allow teachers to demonstrate that they have met that obligation. This means that teachers must be willing to allow teaching to become a public, rather than a private, act if their competency is to be recognized and legitimized.

Schools are in the strongest position to determine how this should be achieved. The Conseil suggests that two dimensions of the obligation to demonstrate competency should be considered:

1) An individual obligation to demonstrate ongoing professional development:

- The obligation of competency creates an individual responsibility for teachers to pursue their professional development on an ongoing basis, and a related obligation to report their progress to their school principal (see priority development area no. 5.)

2) A collective obligation involving an institutional evaluation, including a formative evaluation of teaching:

- The Conseil has previously stated its appreciation of the institutional evaluation process for schools, and its importance as part of a decentralized management system that includes an obligation of accountability. In the view of the Conseil, education stakeholders have a duty to report on the way in which they pursue their mission, and this can be achieved through an institutional evaluation. This means that the obligation of competency for teachers will also require the implementation of formative evaluation measures as part of an institutional evaluation.

Considering:

- the importance, for teachers, of taking greater collective control over the organization of the pedagogical aspects of their work, and of redefining their responsibilities in this regard
- the need to maximize the professional involvement of teachers in the areas defined in the *Education Act*, by ensuring their active involvement in the various mechanisms established by the Act
- the need to define the parameters of teachers' professional responsibility, taking into account
  - the individual responsibility of teachers to report on their professional development to their school principal, who is responsible for maintaining the quality of the educational services provided in the school
  - the importance of institutional evaluations, including teaching assessments, in the quest to ensure that the educational services received by students are of the highest possible quality

the Conseil recommends

that the Minister of Education

19. define the parameters of teachers' professional responsibility concerning

a. the maintenance and development of their professional competencies

b. formative teacher evaluations, as part of an institutional evaluation designed to ensure that the educational services received by students are of the highest possible quality

that school principals, in collaboration with teachers,

20. determine procedures to allow teachers to report on the way in which they assume their professional responsibilities, taking into account

a. the parameters of teachers' professional responsibility, outlined above

b. the legal obligation for teachers to maintain a high level of professionalism

c. the legal obligation for principals to ensure that the educational services provided at the school meet the proper standards of quality

that school boards, school principals and local unions

21. maximize professional involvement by teachers

a. by providing teachers with the necessary information and conditions for contributing fully to existing participatory mechanisms

b. by distinguishing clearly between participatory mechanisms and labour relations mechanisms

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA NO. 8: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRESSIVE EMPOWERMENT OF TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION, AND IMPROVE MECHANISMS LIKELY TO ENSURE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN TEACHERS

The Conseil considers that teachers must show more leadership in the development of the teaching profession. However, many questions remain concerning the best way for teachers to be represented, and the sharing of responsibility for management of the teaching profession. The results of the consultations organized by the Conseil show that the debate has become polarized around two positions, one for and one against the creation of a professional order for teachers. The Conseil has also noted that most efforts are directed at promoting these two options, rather than examining in depth the issue of the development of the teaching profession. The Conseil considers that it is important to take note of the current context when reflecting on the management of the teaching profession, and it suggests various guidelines to support further debate.

The current responsibility of the Québec government for the teaching profession

Currently, the main mechanisms governing the teaching profession are under the responsibility of the Ministère de l'Éducation, and therefore of the Québec government. Several consultations have been carried out by the MEQ in connection with various policies and guideline documents, such as the reference framework for teaching competencies or the professional development guidelines. In addition, teachers are represented on bodies such as the COFPE and the CAPFE. However, legal responsibility for the teaching profession still lies with the government. In other words, regardless of the consultation and participatory mechanisms it has established, the government remains accountable to the population for decisions made concerning the management of the teaching profession.

The central question in the current debate is whether or not it is relevant and legitimate that the government have responsibility for management of the teaching profession.

- Which stakeholders should be responsible for management of the teaching profession?
- What type of structure (government department, committee, commission, board, agency, etc.) is currently in the best position to govern the teaching profession?

The Conseil's examination did not address these two questions specifically, but looked at the teaching profession in a more general way. The request made by the Minister of Education was more concerned with the foundations of the teaching profession than with the question of responsibility for, and management of, the profession. However, the question cannot be avoided in an examination of the significance that should be attached to the teaching profession.

Involvement by teachers in the management of the profession as a condition for professionalization

In its description of a professional ideal for the teaching profession, the Conseil stressed the importance of involvement by teachers in defining the mechanisms used to govern the profession. The Conseil considers that the literature dealing with professionalization clearly indicates that teachers cannot lay claim to professional status unless they are involved in determining the various aspects of their own profession, since involvement is one of the conditions that define a profession. The Conseil believes that teachers must help make all decisions concerning the management of the profession, because they are the people who experience the day-to-day realities of teaching.

Balanced leadership in the management of the teaching profession

The Conseil considers that a balance must be struck between, on the one hand, allowing all aspects of the profession to be determined by teachers and, on the other, doing nothing. This balance can change depending on needs and circumstances. In the view of the Conseil, teachers must be gradually empowered to take on management of the profession to allow them to develop new competencies and show more leadership.

Given the current polarization of the debate concerning management of the profession, the Conseil considers that a gradual process is needed to allow teachers to develop the necessary expertise and take the lead in a more assertive fashion in the development of the teaching profession, in partnerships with other education stakeholders. However, it also considers that the status quo is not an option that will promote professionalization. In other words, the Conseil considers that a new sharing of powers is now necessary.

The Conseil believes that the first stage to consider is the launching of a constructive debate on the management of the teaching profession, to allow a plan of action to be established as quickly as possible, and jointly, by all the parties sharing responsibility for education in Québec. It also believes that priority must be given to the elements identified by the Office des professions du Québec as the weakest links in the profession: permanent teaching licences, teacher evaluations, and supervision of the profession.

Considering:

- that the involvement of teachers is a condition for professionalization
- that the trend towards decentralization in education must also apply to the management of the teaching profession, and that the MEQ should no longer have sole responsibility for management
- that education is a public service and that decisions concerning education must be made as part of a political decision-making process that "removes these issues from the private domain and makes them subject to the analysis and resolution mechanisms with input from society as a whole via shared decision-making institutions" (CSE, 2001a, p. 59, free translation)
- that management of the teaching profession is a focus of current debate
- that the *status quo* in management of the teaching profession is not a solution likely to promote professionalization
- that teachers must gradually take over management of the profession in order to achieve restored value and professionalization
- that some management mechanisms must be improved to ensure the credibility and valuing of the teaching profession

the Conseil recommends

that the Minister of Education

22. support a gradual shift in responsibility of the teaching profession to teachers

23. instruct an independent commission to redefine the management parameters for the teaching profession, in keeping with the goals of professionalization and valuing of teaching; the commission would be

a. independent, in that its members would not be bound by an obligation to represent a given group[13]

b. multi-party, but with a majority of preschool, elementary and secondary school teachers

13. This excludes people acting as spokespersons for a group or organization, of any kind.

The commission would be required to answer the following **three questions,** in particular:

1. Which stakeholders should be responsible for the management of the teaching profession?
2. What type of structure (committee, commission, board, agency, professional order, etc.) would be best able to manage the profession?
3. What would be the best way to move from the current situation to the target situation?

The **mandate** of the commission would **not exceed twelve months,** and it would be required to examine

a. the management of supervisory mechanisms for the teaching profession

- the drafting and updating of professional standards for teaching, taking all dimensions of the profession into account
- the accreditation of basic teacher training programs
- regulations connected to teaching licences, and their application
- professional development guidelines for working teachers
- the drafting and application of a shared code of professional conduct
- complaint management mechanisms

Priority would be given to the aspects of the profession that, in the opinion of the Office des professions du Québec, are the weakest links:

- permanent teaching licences
- teacher evaluations
- discipline (to strengthen investigative mechanisms and make the process more credible for both teachers and the general public)

b. the preparation of a plan of action to ensure the effective implementation of its recommendations

Note concerning all recommendations:

If the responsibilities for the management of the teaching profession become shared in a new way, the recommendations contained in this brief should apply to the party whose mandate includes the responsibility concerned.

CONCLUSION

This brief examines the foundations of the teaching profession and the ways in which it could be developed to further the objective of professionalization. From the beginning of its work, the Conseil decided to take into account the changes that have occurred in the profession over the last 40 years. As early as 1992, the Conseil stated that Québec society should enter into a new social contract with teachers, and that the social contract should take into account the professional nature of the work carried out by teachers. In 2004, a solid new basis for the future development of the teaching profession has been achieved, and this in itself demonstrates how much progress has been made. However, professionalization has not progressed in a linear fashion, but instead in a series of successive waves, depending on the obstacles and difficulties encountered. The Conseil believes that the current context is favourable for the move towards professionalization, for various reasons outlined in the preceding pages, and that it is time to build on what has been accomplished. This brief is intended to mobilize teachers and support the objective of professionalization in the teaching profession, by supplying guidelines, principles and points of reference to continue the work begun 40 years ago.

In this conclusion, the Conseil considers that it is necessary to issue two important messages to education stakeholders. The first concerns teachers, who are directly affected by all the recommendations made, regardless of who is responsible for implementing each recommendation. The second concerns all the stakeholders.

The message to teachers is that the brief made public here sets out a vision for the future of the teaching profession. The Conseil has suggested key guidelines that, in its opinion, could help develop a profession that is stronger, better organized and has its value restored. The objective of this brief is to provide points of reference for the short-term, but especially the medium-term and long-term development of the teaching profession. The Conseil has noted the concerns expressed by certain stakeholders who have pointed out that sometimes a major gap exists between the situation in the field and the vision for the future proposed here. In reality, the teaching profession develops at various paces, depending on the local environment. This is entirely legitimate. In this brief, the Conseil invites teachers to focus on developing their own competencies, claim recognition for their expertise, and acquire more power to influence the way in which the profession is managed. Above all, the members of the profession must raise the value of the profession in their own eyes if the value of teaching

is to be restored in Québec society as a whole. The Conseil has the conviction that teachers have control over their own professional destiny, and that is why it has issued this call to action.

The message to education stakeholders is that teachers alone cannot bring about the development of the teaching profession. The Conseil is aware that this brief proposes a series of upheavals that will have consequences outside the teaching profession. The empowerment of the teaching profession will require a paradigm shift not just among teachers, but also among all partners: the MEQ, school boards, school principals, members of governing boards, other categories of staff, and parents. The work must be carried out in synergy. The current education reform, in its curricular, administrative and pedagogical aspects, and the professionalization of the teaching profession share a common goal–to return power to the players in the field to allow them to respond to the full range of student needs. In addition to a paradigm shift, it also requires a measure of creativity and–as the Conseil is well aware–courage and determination.

In addition to the paradigm shift, the Conseil considers that, if teachers are to move towards their professional ideal, the other stakeholders will have to examine the conditions in which the renewal will take place. Today, teachers are living through a period of turmoil that involves many different changes–it could almost be considered a switch to a culture of continuous change. For innovative, creative teachers with full confidence in their expertise, this can be a stimulating time. However, for all teachers, the changes can be a major source of stress and lead to excessive workloads when the changes come together. For this reason, it is important to consider the current context carefully. Although the Conseil firmly believes that it is necessary to progress towards a professional ideal, it would like to point out that it is also important to listen to the needs expressed by teachers.

Finally, in the opinion of the Conseil, the objectives outlined in this brief are challenging, but not foolhardy. The professional ideal it proposes is not radically different from the ideal put forward by various players in Québec society over the last 40 years. Rather, it is intended to provide new impetus for professionalization, by taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the current reform and the intrinsic valuing of the teaching profession. Ultimately, behind the questions that involve the teaching profession and the current reform lies the very important issue of success for Québec students.

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The complete text of the brief (French) and of the abridged versions (French and English) is available on the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation Web site: (**www.cse.gouv.qc.ca**)

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